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In contrast to the usual format, this Bilk starts with the USO-section, as it is the most important news item of this issue.

USO

● Sweden: The Swedish navy has finally admitted that their submarine hunts of the 1980s and early 90s were based on misidentification of common objects paired with over-reaction, a view I have held all those years. I summarise two articles on the recent developments, one from the Tagesspiegel, Berlin, August 31, 94 (reprinted in CENAP Report 218, p. 51) and from the taz, Berlin, Sept. 7, 94 (reprinted in CENAP Report 219, p.54). Haakon Neckman (a fitting name, neck being the Norse word for water spirit), ex-commander of a special navy unit trained to track Soviet submarines, said on August 30, 94, to the Svenska Dagbladet newspaper of Stockholm that although the Swedish navy had been convinced they had recorded alien submarine noises during the hunts, tapes of ordinary animal noises (such as seals, otters, mink and shoals of fish) have proved to be identical to the ones recorded during the hunts. Neckman was uncertain which of the hunts had actually been triggered by animal noises, but admitted there had been "several" in his time as Commander in 1990 - 1993. Despite many water-bombs, which killed tons of fish since a Soviet sub, the U 137, accidentally ran aground off Karlskrona in 1981, no alien submarine was ever confirmed in Swedish waters. Most of the sightings by civilians were later explained as strange waves, trawlers in fog and the occasional seal and whale. Now, we learn that the accustic confirmation was faulty too! Ultra-modern microphones had been installed along the Swedish coast in 1991, the records they made of "engine and caterpillar-like sounds" led Bengt Gustafsson to declare in February 1993 that "we will know in the next months who is visiting us." Now that the Navy knows, they'd surely be happier if they were still in the unclear! One episode, on Sept 13, 1992, when the Navy fired torpedos and water bombs at an alleged intruder, they were surprised the only got dead fish, no oil leak and no wreckage. Press spokesman Owe Wagermark now knows why: All - or all those triggered by the detection of underwater sounds - hunts up until the last one in summer 1994 (from the installment of the microphones in 1991) followed after "identical sounds had been reported. We are now analysing all tape records. We've got mainly mink." There is something in the whole story for Loch Ness monster-hunters to learn, and I'm looking forward to their reinterpretation of sonar and photographic evidence.

BOOK REVIEW

● "Forbidden Archeology" by Michael A Cremo and Richard L Thompson is one of the most interesting Fortean books I've seen recently. Although not on marine creatures, it includes large fortean bits and a fair share of cryptozoology. It is published by Govardhan Hill Publishing (PO Box 52, Badger, CA 93603, USA), a publishing company associated with what we in Europe know as the Hare Kishna movement. It sets out to show that our perception of human evolution is all wrong. While I disagree with the main thesis of the book, which to me appears just as preconceived as the scientific dogmatism attacked in the book, the authors assemble the largest mass on anomalous human fossils and artifacts I have seen, including many of my favorites, for which I had been unable to find more information in other books (for example, the many alleged hominid fossils found in Argentina). I recommend the book as a large (800 pages) collection of source material, but I do not trust the conclusions of the authors. Those areas I'm knowledgeable in, the cryptozoology of abominable snowpersobs, seems to rely heavily on what some professors who believe in Bigfoot or almas say, and not on critical evidence unearthed by the many dedicated forteans (there are many who completely doubt Bigfoot, for example). For people who want to follow up unusual ideas on evolution, like Francoise de Sarre, the book is certainly a must. And who knows, if man has actually existed on earth since times geological, he might have evolved into mermaids and batpeople, as de Sarre believes.

BEHEMOTH

● Bibliography: - A joke in our local newspaper, Tip der Woche, Nov 28, 94, p. 30: "A tourists ask a Scottish local: 'When does Nessie usually come up?' 'Normally, after five to six whiskies!'" -- dog-faces fish in Clear Lake, California, identified as catfish (Strange 14, p.5/ F de Sarre has also researched this catch and thinks it could be one of his intermediate mammalian-fish creatures) -- giant turtles in USA lakes (Strange 14, p.34) and big beaver in Illinois (INFO Journal 71, p.53; Fortean Times 78, p.12) -- surgeon's photo of Loch Ness monster from 1934 was hoax (Strange 14, p.36) -- seal in New Jersey (Fortean Times 77, p.13) and seal in East River, New York (INFO Journal 71, p. 54) -- Lake monster nes in Fortean Times 77, p. 16 -- the Lake Windermere Tizzie-Wizzie was a publicity stunt (Fortean Times 77, p. 33) -- Lake serpent in Llyn Cynwch, Wales, Fortean Times 77, p.45 -- flying dragon in Southern France in 1930/1931 (INFO Journal 71, p.44, research by F de Sarre) and flying snakes in Bulgaria (Fortean Times 78, p.57) -- sighting of a big serpent in June 1993 at Cisterna, Italy (INFO Journal 71, p.49f) -- new book on bunyips and other mystery beast from Australia (Fortean Times 78, p.60)

ISIS

● Bibliography: Hong Kong mermaid, Oktober 1993 (Strange 14, p.5) -- mermaids and human-like water monsters are mentioned by several contributors to the excellent new venture by Fortean Times, called "Fortean Studies" (20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1 DX, United Kingdom.) I'd especially recommend two top studies on historical forteana and the context within which they should be viewed, by Sven Rosen and Michael Goss.

LEVIATHAN

● Bibliography: In Oktober 1993, pilots spotted two mating sea serpents in Saanich Inlet, British Columbia, Canada (Strange 14, p. 5) -- Irish sea serpent wave of 1850, article by myself trying to unravel the dynamics that underly such fortean waves, in Strange 14, p. 30f -- Tecolotla sea monster, Mexico, 1969. New research confirms that it has never been anything else but a sperm whale (INFO Journal 71, p. 24-26)

KRAKEN

● Bibliography: In Fortean Studies, there is also a long and detailed article on the St Augustine, Florida, monster, by long-time researcher Michel Raynal. This is excellent "scientific" cryptozoology. I'm usually very skeptical of orthodox cryptozoology, but Raynal may be right and the carcass of 1896 was actually a gigantic new species of Cirroteuthis. So far, I think the identification as sperm whale is just as valid, but Raynal suggest new tests which could bring new evidence for his theory. Also by Raynal, with Gary Mangiacopra, Dwight Smith and David Avery, a similar good article on the monster in Of Sea and Shore, 17:3, Fall 1994, p. 171-178

LIGHTS IN/OVER THE SEA

● The US have denied that one of the nuclear subs is to blame for an incident in Oktober, when the Russian detected an alien submarine off Kola Peninsula. Admiral Jerofejew had told interfax that the unidentified sub had left the navy base of Seweromorsk only after several warnings. From Sweden to Russia... (Die Rheinpfalz, November 4, 94) o Not a UFO, a meteorite fell into the North Sea off the Dutch coast in May 94. Several blue and red points of light fell into the sea, one part allegedly crashed at Alkmaar, north of Amsterdam (Rheinpfalz May 30, 94) o In July 94, a strip of sea 1.5 km long and 300 m wide was found to be devoid of life off the Dutch island Texel. It was claimed the explosive spread of luminous sea animals was to blame (Rheinpfalz, July 9, 94).

MARINE LIFE

● Whales: A 20-tonnes, 8 m whale was caught in a fisherman's net at Maskat in the Persian Gulf. Divers from Great Britain and Oman saved the humpedback-whale after 5 torturous days when the cut the net. (Bild Cologne, Nov 17, 1994, p.12; Berliner Morgenpost Nov 17, 94, p. 32) -- A 15 m sperm whale stranded on a sandbank in front of the German island Baltrum in Nov 94. It died several hours later and caused a mild panic when people and officials feared it might explode due to gasses formed during decomposition. (Rheinpfalz, Nov 5, 94). ● Shark: 42-year old James Robinson was attacked and killed by a great white off Santa Barbara, California. (Rheinpfalz, DEC 12, 94)